

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and favorable action on the subject application. Claims 1-6, 8-14, 17-18, and 20 are pending in the application.

Objections and Rejections Based on 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Official Action stated an objection to the amendment that was filed on 24 September 2004 for introducing new matter into the specification. Also, claims 5, 6, 13, 17, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 1st paragraph, for not being enabled by the specification. Finally, claims 19 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph, as being indefinite because certain features recited therein were considered to lack antecedent basis.

Applicant has amended claim 1 to recite a "first curved end". Also in claim 1, Applicant has removed the language following the conjunction "wherein" that qualified the "second curved end". Claim 8 is revised to be consistent with the revisions to claim 1. In light of the foregoing comments and revisions, Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections based on 35 U.S.C. § 112, 1st and 2nd paragraphs.

Rejections Based on § 102

Claims 1-4 and 8-12 stand rejected under § 102(b) as being anticipated by Geiger. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Independent claim 1 is amended to clarify further aspects of the device. Applicant reproduces the following for convenience of discussion, with redlines shown:

"a second curved end for supporting at least one skein of the wire on the device, wherein the second curved end comprises a curved inside surface, wherein the curved inside surface defines a plurality of grooves, and wherein at least one of the grooves has a diameter approximately the same as the diameter of the wire latch configured for securing the at least one skein of the wire."

The originally-filed specification fully supports the above revisions under § 112, 1st paragraph, at least at page 6, lines 1-5. Also, Figure 1A as amended in connection with Applicant's response dated 24 September 2004 illustrates this feature.

Geiger's hook 4 does not disclose a "curved inside surface" defining "a plurality of grooves, and wherein at least one of the grooves has a diameter approximately the same as the diameter of the wire", as recited in claim 1. Geiger discloses a wire support system for training hop vines featuring a hook 4 as shown in Figures 1 and 2. Further embodiments are shown in Figures 3 and 4. Turning to Geiger's Figures 1 and 2, it appears that eye 3 of hook 4 receives a loop 2 formed from a vertical strand 1 of monofilament along which the hop vines grow. Eye 5 appears to receive horizontal wire 6, from which the vertical monofilament

strands 1 are suspended. However, turning to Geiger's Figure 2 in particular, neither eye 5 nor eye 3 include an inside surface that defines a plurality of grooves, wherein at least one of the grooves is approximately the same diameter as either the wire 6 or the strand 1. On at least this basis, Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 102 rejection of claim 1. The above comments apply equally to claims 2-4 and 8-12, which depend from claim 1.

Dependent claims 17, 18, and 20 stand rejected under § 102(b) as being anticipated by Bennett. Initially, Applicant requests clarification of how Bennett can anticipate these dependent claims, absent a showing that Bennett also discloses each feature in independent claim 1, from which these claims depend.

Aside from the foregoing, each of these claims depend from claim 1, the rejection of which is addressed above. Even assuming that Bennett discloses a collapsible utility hook, Bennett does not disclose a hook having a curved inside surface, wherein the curved inside surface defines a plurality of grooves, and wherein at least one of the grooves has a diameter approximately the same as the diameter of the wire, as recited in claim 1. While the Action cited Bennett for various teachings relating to the hinge 27, none of these teachings relate to the features of claim 1 discussed above. On at least this basis, Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 102 rejections of claim 17, 18, and 20.

Rejections Based on § 103

Dependent claims 5, 6, and 13 stand rejected as being obvious over Geiger in view of Day. Each of these claims depends from claim 1, the rejection of which is addressed above. Even assuming that Geiger and Day are properly combined, neither of these references alone or in combination teach or suggest a hook having a curved inside surface, wherein the curved inside surface defines a plurality of grooves, and wherein at least one of the grooves has a diameter approximately the same as the diameter of the wire, as recited in claim 1.

Geiger is discussed above in connection with claim 1. Applicant agrees that Geiger fails to disclose a rubber coating, as stated on page 7 of the Action. Thus, the Action cited Day for this teaching. Day describes a banana hook, but fails to provide the teachings missing from Geiger, namely, a plurality of grooves defined along an inside curved surface, wherein at least one of the grooves is approximately the same diameter as the wire. While the Action cited Day for the rubber coating recited in claims 5, 6, and 13, this teaching does not relate to the features of claim 1 discussed above. On at least this basis, Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejections of claims 5, 6, and 13.

Dependent claim 14 stands rejected as obvious over Geiger in view of Taylor. Claim 14 depends from claim 1, and is amended to clarify features of the device. More particularly, claim 14 recites that each of the plurality of grooves has a diameter approximately equal to the diameter of the wire. The revisions to

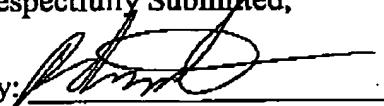
claim 14 are fully supported under § 112, 1st paragraph, on at least the same basis as were the revisions to claim 1.

While Applicant agrees that Geiger does not disclose grooves, Taylor does not teach or suggest grooves as necessary to render claim 14 obvious, even if Geiger is properly combined with Taylor under § 103. Even assuming that Taylor discloses a drip hose hanger having grooves 18, the diameters of these grooves 18 are not approximately equal to the diameter of the hose held within the hanger. Thus, Taylor does not provide the teaching missing from Geiger necessary to render claim 14 obvious.

Conclusion

Applicant requests prompt and favorable action on this application at the earliest convenience of the Office. If any issue remains unresolved that would prevent allowance of this case, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney to resolve the issue.

Respectfully Submitted,

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